

REMARKS

As requested by the Examiner, the drawings and the specification have been amended to refer to slit 55 and side 51. Other portions of the Specification were amended to enhance the clarity thereof. The New Drawing Sheet places numeral 46 directly on the clip's base, and inserts numerals 51 and 55 into Figure 5. An Annotated Drawing Sheet is included herein, with the changes made to Figure 5 indicated in red. Claims 18 and 19 were amended to correct the lack of antecedence for "pressure means". No new matter has been added.

Claims 1 – 4, 8 – 11, 16 – 19, 28, 30, 32 and 33 are pending. Claims 5 – 7, 12, 13, 20 – 22, 24, 25, 27 and 31 have been withdrawn by the Examiner.

I. Claims 1 – 4, 16 – 19 , 28, 30, 32 and 33 are Novel and Nonobvious over AAPA (FIG. 4) (hereinafter referred to as AAPA)

Claims 1 – 4, 16 – 19 , 28 -30, 32 and 33 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) over AAPA. This rejection is traversed.

The pending claims are novel and nonobvious over AAPA for at least two reasons. AAPA's clip applies force to the *central area* of a tray stack that results in damaged trays. Applicants overcome the disadvantage of AAPA by applying a force to the perimeter of a stack as set forth in independent claims 1, 16, and 28:

Claim 1: "An apparatus for clamping together in a stack at least one tray... the apparatus comprising ... at least two pressure members". The pressure members apply a force "on a portion of the *perimeter* of the stack".

Claim 16: "An apparatus for clamping together in a stack at least one tray and a cover, the apparatus comprising ... at least two pressure members".

The “pressure members apply a force in an upward direction relative to the base on a portion of the *perimeter* of the stack....”

Claim 28: “An apparatus for clamping together in a stack at least one tray... the apparatus comprising ... at least two pressure members attached to the channel structure for applying a force in an upward direction relative to the base, wherein each pressure member applies pressure on a portion of the *perimeter* of the stack.”

Unlike in AAPA where pressure is applied to a central area of a tray, the current invention applies a force to the perimeter of a tray. This distinction by itself suffices to render Claims 1 – 4, 8 – 11, 16 – 19, 28, 30, 32 and 33 patentable.

The Office Action states that AAPA’s pressure member is capable of applying pressure to a portion of a perimeter of a stack when the AAPA clip is used with a stack having a dimension whose perimeter lies on top of the two pressure members (*note* Office Action, p. 3, paragraph 2). The Examiner’s argument relies on an illustration that surfaced for the first time in the May 2006 Office Action (page 5, hereinafter referred to as the After-Filed Figure). In the After-Filed Figure, a tray stack is illustrated having a perimeter that lies on springs 34. However, Applicant submits that the After-Filed Figure is not prior art, as the illustration was developed after Applicants filed the present application, and the illustration was developed with Applicants’ claims before the Examiner. Assuming *arguendo*, that the After-Filed Figure on page 5 of the Office Action is prior art, the After-Filed Figure does not anticipate any of the pending claims.

Springs 34 in the After-Filed Figure are curved and have a high point at each center. The force applied by springs 34 is not located on the terminal points of each spring, but instead on the top center or high point of each curve. As a

result, springs 34 contact the central area of the stack in the After-Filed Figure, thereby causing unwanted distortion of the trays.

In summary, the Office Action uses hindsight reconstruction in altering Figure 4 of Applicants' application. However, hindsight reconstruction is an improper basis for rejecting claims.

Turning now to the acknowledged prior art, AAPA also fails to teach or suggest using a stack that has a dimension that is radically different from the dimension of the base of the channel. AAPA provides no motivation to use a tray whose perimeter partially contacts springs 34. Moreover, it would be uncertain how far to slide a narrow tray into AAPA. It would also be inefficient to substitute narrower trays as fewer components can be transported than with a tray that corresponds to the dimensions of the clip channel. In summary, AAPA does not teach or suggest designing a tray with a smaller dimension than its channel.

AAPA also fails to disclose a clip that includes resilient members as recited in Claims 2, 4, and 19. Claim 2 is representative of claims 4 and 19. Claim 2 recites in part: "a first resilient member extending from the base on one end of the channel; and a second resilient member extending from the base on a second end of the channel that is opposite the one end of the channel." Nothing in AAPA teaches or suggests adding resilient members to AAPA's clip. Therefore claims 2, 4, and 19 are also novel and nonobvious over AAPA because of their recitation of resilient members.

A rejection under 35 USC 102(b) requires that the four corners of a single prior art reference describe every element of the claim such that a person can practice the invention without undue experimentation. Atlas Powder Co. vs. Ireco Inc., 190 F.3d 1342, 1347, 51 USPQ2d 1943, 1947 (Fed. Cir. 1999). AAPA does not include a stack with a smaller dimension as the Office Action attempts to argue with the After-Filed Figure. Clearly, AAPA fails to anticipate claims 1 – 4, 16 – 19, 28 -30, 32 and 33 under 35 USC 102(b). Accordingly, Claims 1, 16, and 28, as well as their respective dependent claims are novel over AAPA. In addition, nowhere in AAPA is the skilled artisan motivated to incorporate resilient members into AAPA's clip. Therefore, the Examiner is requested to withdraw the §102(b) rejection of claims 1 – 4, 16 – 19 , 28 -30, 32 and 33.

II. Claims 8 -11 are Non-obvious over AAPA or the After-Filed Figure

Claims 8 – 11 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over AAPA. This rejection is traversed.

Claim 8 recites the apparatus of claim 1 for clamping together in a stack at least one tray that holds integrated circuits, “wherein the apparatus is injection molded in one piece using an injection molding material.” Claim 8, being dependent on claim 1, includes all the novel features of claim 1, discussed above. Accordingly, since claims 8– 11 depend on a patentable independent claim (Claim 1), claims 8 – 11 are also patentable for similar reasons.

Claim 11 is further nonobvious because it claims resilient members that are neither taught nor suggested by AAPA. Specifically, Claim 11 recites “a first resilient member extending from the base on one end of the channel; and a second resilient member extending from the base on a second end of the channel that is opposite the one end of the channel.” Conspicuously, each end of AAPA’s channel lacks any type of resilient member. As a result, AAPA fails to suggest the invention of Claim 11. Therefore, the rejection of Claims 8 -11 under 35 USC 103(a) should be withdrawn.

III. Conclusion

AAPA fails to teach or suggest the claimed invention. First, AAPA does not disclose or render obvious the application of a force to the perimeter of a stack inserted therein. The Office Action uses hindsight reconstruction in altering Figure 4 of Applicants’ application. However, hindsight reconstruction is an improper basis for rejecting any of the pending claims. AAPA as set forth in Fig. 4 provides no motivation to use a tray whose perimeter partially contacts springs 34. Second, AAPA disclose resilient members as part of its clip. Consequently, all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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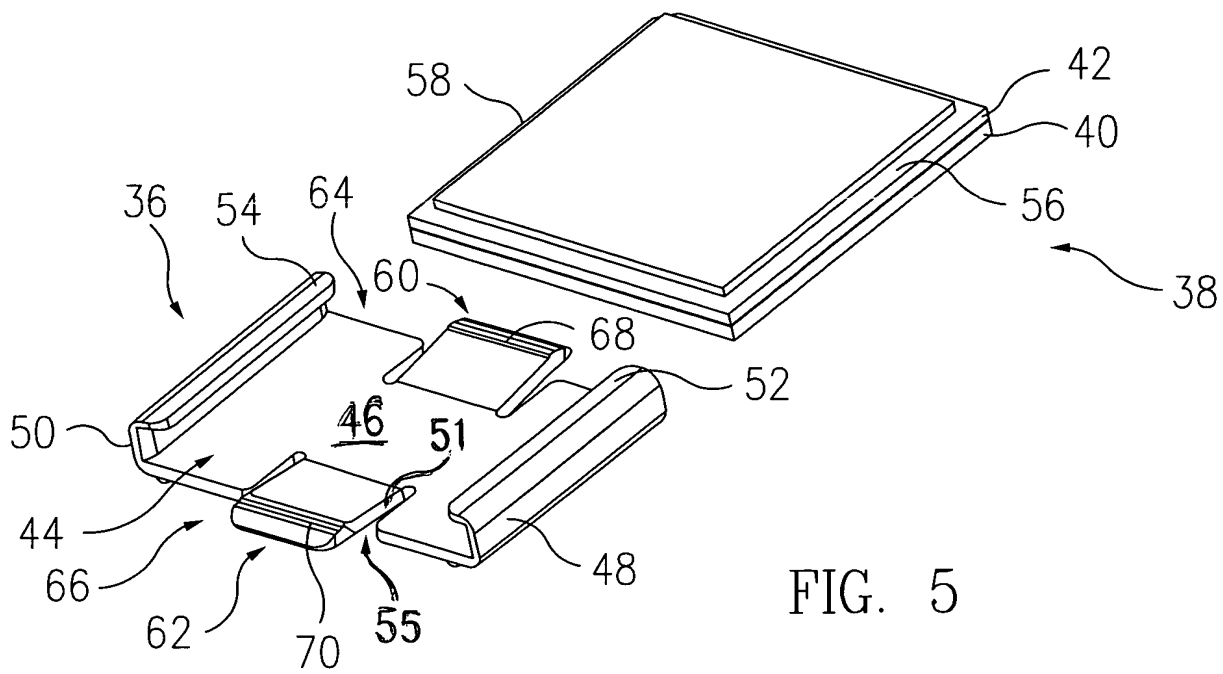


FIG. 5

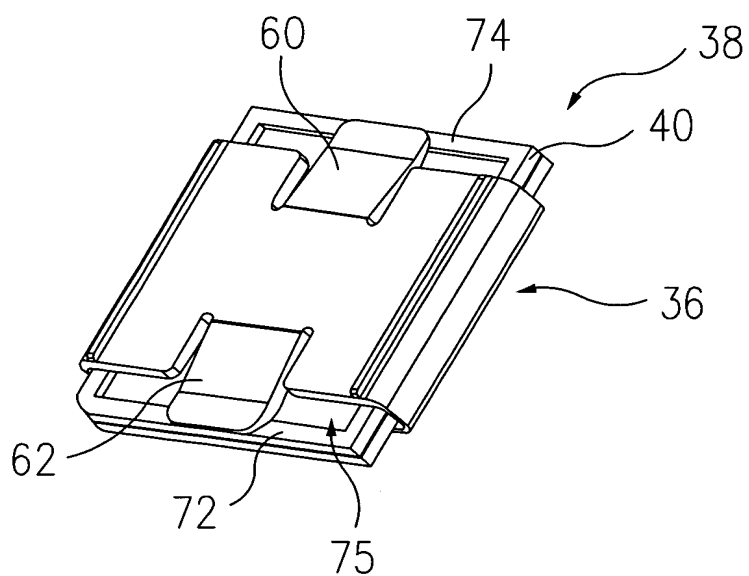


FIG. 6